



## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

February 15, 2008

Subject: 2008 Salary Setting Commission's Recommendation

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members:

By this letter, The Salary Setting Commission hereby submits its salary recommendations for Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010. What follows is the Commission's official proposal for increases to be incorporated into the Salary Ordinances for Fiscal Years 2008-09 and 2009-10, pursuant to the requirements of Sections 12.1, 24.1, and 41.1 of the City Charter.

### THE COMMISSION'S PROCESS

The Commission met on approximately five occasions between early November of 2007 and late January of 2008. We reviewed the comprehensive data compiled by or through the City of San Diego's Personnel Department staff. It included, but was not limited to, the types of data which have become standard over the years, such as: salary surveys for comparable positions in other cities; current and historic increases in the Consumer Price Index; and the salaries of other managerial and executive level City of San Diego employees. This time around it also included a consideration of the new Strong Mayor form of government, and the impact that has had on the duties and responsibilities of the Mayor and Council.

With the assistance of staff, the Commission wrote to hundreds of community and civic organizations, civic leaders, past and present City Councilmembers, and members of the electronic and print media, informing them the salary evaluation process was once again underway, and inviting participation and comment. Two logistical planning sessions were followed by three public meetings, all of which were held downtown at the Civic Center Plaza Building; anyone and everyone was welcome to attend and express their opinions. Ultimately, a total of only three individuals from the public participated.

For those who could not attend in person, written correspondence was also encouraged; but nothing new was received.

The Commission first studied the facts, figures, comparisons and trends in some depth, and then explored a very broad range of approaches and rationales. The goal was to develop appropriate salary recommendations for the Mayor and Councilmember *positions*, given all of the usual considerations, priorities and criteria. This included:

- Adequacy of current salary, in view of San Diego's cost of living
- The importance of establishing salaries high enough to attract qualified candidates
- The existing benefits package accompanying the positions
- Comparable data, including the Consumer Price Index and rates of inflation
- Comparable data, including Mayor and Councilmember salaries in various/comparable California, Western, and other cities
- The current salaries of other City management type personnel, including but not limited to the Police Chief, the Fire Chief, and the Mayor's own Chief Operating Officer, among others



### Salary Setting Commission

1200 Third Avenue, Suite 300 • San Diego, CA 92101

Tel (619) 236-6400





- Historical salary data for the Mayor and Councilmembers, including the number of Salary Setting Commission recommendations which have been rejected, and
- The heavy responsibilities and extreme importance of the positions

During the review process, each Commissioner evaluated the data independently. The information was then revisited together, as a group, which was when widely varying perspectives emerged. Two Commission Members personally supported raises which would essentially mirror the increase in the Consumer Price Index (only); two other Members attempted to pass a resolution recommending that the current salaries jump by more than 100%.

In response to these public debates, the residents who came to comment expressed additional concerns, criticisms and suggestions, all of which were also considered and discussed.

At the conclusion of all that, the Commission, as a group, was eventually able to pass a compromise set of recommendations, however one Commissioner made it clear the he was voting for the recommendations despite the fact that they were *too low*; while another Commissioner voted “nay” because they were *too high*.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Since 1998 the cost of living in San Diego has increased approximately 35%; Mayor and Council salaries have not kept pace. The Salary Setting Commission attempted, at a minimum, to both account for that substantial increase and, in addition, to try and bring salaries for the Mayor and Council *roughly* in line with salaries in other comparable cities. We also wanted to see them move somewhat closer to the dramatically higher salaries enjoyed by various City Department Heads, such as the Police and Fire Chiefs, the City Attorney, etc.

The Commission believes that the Mayor and Council positions have become increasingly more demanding as the spending power of their pay checks has declined. And a majority of Commissioners have long been troubled by the fact that the salaries of the Mayor and Council have not only fallen far behind the salaries of other important, but comparatively less critical, public and elected positions in San Diego, they even lag behind the salaries of some of the support staffers who assist the Mayor and Council.

With that backdrop in mind, and despite the broad range of philosophies, the Commission approved the following salary recommendations:

<u>EFFECTIVE DATE</u>	<u>CITY COUNCIL</u>	<u>MAYOR</u>
Current	\$75,386	\$100,464
7-1-08 (32.65%/29.40% increase)	\$100,000	\$130,000
7-1-09 (25.00%/15.38% increase)	\$125,000	\$150,000

Despite what it understands and anticipates will be strong political pressure to do otherwise, the Salary Setting

Commission strongly encourages the City Council to adopt, without adjustment, each of its recommendations, so that San Diego can effectively attract and retain qualified candidates in the future. The citizens of this city will benefit from a pay scale that allows interested, capable, hard-working people who do *not* possess independent wealth to run for public office. The failure of the Mayor and Council to accept the Commission's recommendations, *yet again* would do a disservice to all San Diegans.

On behalf of the Commission, I wish to be heard on these recommendations and would be happy to respond to any questions the Council may have at that time.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Pedersdotter', written over a horizontal line.

Deb C. Pedersdotter, President  
Salary Setting Commission

DCP/ebs